

## Thanking God for you: the gift of good friends Colossians 4:7-18

### INTRODUCTION

Christ-followers are expected to be grateful people. Thanksgiving is mentioned approximately 140 times. In the Bible we find the Israelites giving thanks in **Exodus 15**; Israel giving thanks in **2 Chronicles** for the construction of the temple; we find King David giving thanks in **Psalms 100 & 103**; the prophet Daniel giving thanks in **Daniel 6:10**. We also find the apostle Paul giving thanks in many places throughout the New Testament. He exhorts followers of Jesus to **“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) Listen...**a spirit of joyous, continual thankfulness ought to characterize us as Christians.**

Please turn in your Bible to **Colossians 4:7-18**. In these final verses in Colossians Paul lists a number of people he recognizes as blessings given by God. Paul gives us names of people who mean much to him. **In the passage before us, we go beyond mere friends to friends in Christ...members of the same faith family.**

### I. These \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ

These people, all from different backgrounds were all brought together by their common experience of grace at the hand of our Lord Jesus. In Paul's list of friends there are three **Jews: Aristarchus, Mark and Justus** and also some **Gentiles: Epaphras, Luke, and Demas**. What unlikely friends these were. These people who at one time were enemies because of their nationality and religious background, were now friends because they were united in Christ. The gospel builds bridges over ethnic, racial, economic, and sexual divisions.

In this group of people were a **doctor (Luke)**, a **pastor (Epaphras)**, a **fugitive (Onesimus)**, and a **woman (Nympha)**. **They came from different backgrounds, but their friendship was anchored in their relationship to Christ.** This is what happens when Christ enters our lives. Worldly barriers lose their significance when our focus is Jesus.

You see, only with a fellow believer do we share so much in **common:**

- **We share a common \_\_\_\_\_:** we are sinners in need of grace.
- **We share a common \_\_\_\_\_:** that the finished work of Christ cleanses us from sin and sets us free from our just condemnation.
- **We share a common \_\_\_\_\_:** that we will live forever in God's kingdom as children of God
- **We share a common \_\_\_\_\_:** to know the Lord and to make Him known, especially to those who are perishing
- **We share a common \_\_\_\_\_:** to love the Lord, serve the Lord and one another.

II. These \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_ in  
shared \_\_\_\_\_

III. These \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_  
in the \_\_\_\_\_ of life.

### **CONCLUSION/INVITATION**

What can we take with us this morning? Here are four truths:

1. God uses \_\_\_\_\_ people to  
\_\_\_\_\_ His work.
  
2. Everyone needs a \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. We should \_\_\_\_\_ God for the \_\_\_\_\_  
we have.
  
4. Understanding friendship \_\_\_\_\_ our  
\_\_\_\_\_ with Christ.